

Burnside Primary School



Overarching Curriculum Policy

Written by: K Charlton Date: July 2021 Review: Dec 2021
Next Review: Dec 2022

This policy has been devised to explain and detail our overarching curriculum strategy and the way we assess how much progress pupils have made. It should be read alongside our subject specific policies.

Curriculum Intent

At Burnside Primary School, we aim to create a challenging and coherent curriculum to ensure that our children enjoy, achieve and are equipped for the next stage of their learning journey. We aim to provide our pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives and to take responsibility for their own learning.

Our curriculum aims:

- To create a safe, happy and supportive environment;
- To provide a coherent, challenging and engaging curriculum which develops a love of learning for pupils and staff;
- To encourage pupils to take risks in their learning;
- To develop in our children a sense of awe, curiosity and wonder for the world around them;
- To shape well-rounded, determined young people who can face the challenges of the modern world with confidence;
- To ensure that children leave our school competent readers, writers and mathematicians;
- To instil values which equip our children to be good citizens and learners as well as contributing positively to society.

At Burnside Primary School, we encourage our children to be creative, unique, open-minded and independent individuals, respectful of themselves and of others, in our local community and the wider world. The breadth and balance of our curriculum and ethos promotes life in modern Britain. We work hard to nurture our children so they grow into safe, caring, democratic, responsible and tolerant adults who make a positive difference to British society and the world.

Our values underpin our curriculum and are characterised by the ‘Burnside Bunch’:





Resilience: We provide positive school experiences through a rich curriculum so that pupils have the opportunity to develop their strengths and interests. We value engagement, enjoyment and play, as well as supporting children in managing their emotions so that they can 'bounce back' from adverse experiences. Our mascot, "Resilient Rex", ensures that all children understand the characteristics of resilience and that they develop these skills in a fun and child friendly way.



Equality: We develop an ethos that values and respects all people. Activities and resources within our curriculum celebrate similarities and differences between pupils, their cultures and beliefs, and they learn that different things contribute to identity. Lessons promote diversity in the classroom, and in order for pupils to understand where important knowledge comes from, we make sure our materials derive from a range of cultures and backgrounds. Our goal is to create an inclusive classroom environment with a shared sense of belonging in both the school and the community.



Trust: We believe that trust is an important value as it is a strong foundation on which to build relationships between all stakeholders. In addition, honesty helps promote trust between pupils.

Trust means:

- Feeling comfortable with someone
- Being honest with someone
- Believing that someone will look after us
- Protecting the feelings of others
- Knowing that someone won't hurt us



Potential: We support pupils in realising their potential and building aspirations. Our curriculum offer has the potential to exert a lasting and fundamental influence on the quality of learning and achievement of all children in the school. We encourage all of our children to strive for success and support them in developing their self-belief.



Empathy: Empathy is the heart of our classroom culture. Our curriculum supports the development of empathy and tolerance through, for example, assemblies, drama and our reading curriculum, as well as topics such as history, Religious Education (RE) and Personal Social Education (PSE) so that pupils build friendships based on positive relationships, helping them to develop their emotional intelligence.



Respectful and Responsible Members of our Community: Our curriculum helps pupils become active, responsible members of our school, the locality, the country and the world. It takes into account the context of the community that we serve. Pupils learn about the rich history of our locality, the mines upon the community in the past and how our area has changed over time. They will also learn about the people who live here now and how they can contribute to a sense of community.



Independence: We believe in fostering independence in our children. It is about learning to do things for oneself and taking responsibility for their own learning.



Diversity: We aim to combine understanding y ensuring our children see the inextricable link between differences that shape our view of the world, our perspective and our approach. Our children recognise, respect and valuing difference and our curriculum teaches about the protected characteristics.

Language Acquisition

We recognise that many of our children enter our Early Years with the need to develop their speech and language skills. Our curriculum therefore, has a strong focus on closing the gap in language development and vocabulary experience by exposing our pupils to rich language and providing opportunities to develop talk. We pay close attention to the development of language paying particular attention to the development of speech and vocabulary because it is fundamental to children's cognitive development.

There is a focus on developing more advanced vocabulary through providing a rich reading curriculum both within English and across the wider subjects.

- The curriculum planning for each subject contains subject-specific vocabulary that is explicitly taught within each unit of learning through for example, exploring their etymological roots. In this way, pupils will 'grow' their vocabularies. A ladder of vocabulary progression has been created for each subject area.
- Speech and Language Interventions such as the Nuffield Early Language intervention are used to support pupils on entry to Reception Class.

Since the majority of our pupils come from a white British background and are mainly Christian, we have identified the need to expose them to rich and diverse cultural experiences so that they learn about the religious beliefs of others, both in school and in the wider community. This is reflected in our resources, such as reading materials, in the visits out and the visitors into school, and in assemblies. It is also reflected in our curriculum content. For example, when choosing a location for

pupils in KS1 to study in geography, we have chosen Zambia so that the cultural as well as locational contrast to our locality can be studied. We know that our families and the community can provide a wealth of knowledge about themselves and so actively seek their involvement. The more our pupils are exposed to diverse people and groups, the more prepared they will be for life beyond the classroom.

Our unique curriculum is centred around the branches of priority on our Burnside Curriculum tree.



The curriculum is also underpinned by the Burnside Big Ideas which are threads interwoven within and across curriculum subjects.



Our planned curriculum is:

- **A progressive model.** Our curriculum describes the journey and models the progress that we hope our pupils will take during their time at our school. At specific points in this journey, there are 'checkpoints' which assess whether pupils are meeting curriculum related expectations.
- **Coherent.** We have paid attention to the 'curriculum threads' and concepts that underpin each curriculum area. By identifying these first, we are then able to link the content of each unit of learning to these concepts. We want our pupils to know more and have a deep knowledge of what they have learnt. This means being able to see the links between what they know and how new learning connects to prior learning. We have paid careful attention to the underlying knowledge that is needed in order to access subjects in later years. Our

curriculum is therefore sequenced carefully so that key ideas and concepts are continuously revisited, remembered and built upon.

- **Organised into clearly defined subject disciplines.** We continue to focus on developing staff subject knowledge, drawing on the National Curriculum purpose and study aims, as well as utilising subject associations to support our understanding of each subject area. By teaching and organising our curriculum into specific subjects in KS2, we have been able to ensure that lessons in a unit of learning are carefully sequenced and lead to an end goal.
- **Rich, meaningful knowledge.** This helps children to understand the world around them. Planning the teaching and learning of meaningful, linked knowledge helps children to embed their knowledge. Furthermore, rich and meaningful knowledge supports children in making connections between concepts and subjects.
- **Informed by cognitive science** about how children learn best and remember. We know that long-term memory is enhanced when time is devoted to retrieving information that is to be remembered in the future and spaced at appropriate intervals. Lessons are planned to begin with a recap on previous knowledge that is essential to build on and promote long-term retention of new knowledge.
- **Ambitious for all.** We ensure that pupils with lower starting points are not offered a diminished diet, but are supported through scaffolding and support. High quality talk underpins reading and writing, and lessons are characterised by high challenge but low threat. A carefully planned combinations of teacher-led, child-led and open ended tasks supports children in reaching their potential and learning beyond their comfort zone.
- **Knowledge-rich.** While we acknowledge the importance of developing skills, we also understand the importance of a curriculum that is centred round the acquisition of knowledge. By sharing knowledge with pupils, we are giving them the opportunity to make sense of, improve and develop the knowledge necessary to prosper in the world we live in. Precise knowledge, including specific vocabulary, to be taught and learnt for each unit, is clearly set out in our planning as well as pupil knowledge organisers.
- **Reading-rich.** Our school environment celebrates reading for pleasure as a valued and purposeful part of the curriculum. We use whole class, guided and independent reading strategies to teach decoding and language comprehension. We know that our brains favour stories and learning will be deeper if we incorporate reading material into our schemes. Pupils, therefore, have opportunities to read and listen to a wide variety of stories and nonfiction texts that are linked to units of work being studied.
- **Broad and balanced.** We promote a varied and rich curriculum that builds upon pupils' existing cultural capital and taps into the moral, social, spiritual and cultural elements which help prepare our pupils for the next stage in their education. Our curriculum is built around an extensive series of visits and visitors which allows our children to learn through rich first- hand experiences.

We ensure that there are visits to museums, places of worship, afterschool clubs and close links with the community, as well as utilising expertise from numerous coaches and teachers. Drop down weeks focus on current themes and allow links across the curriculum subjects.

- **Planned using high quality, varied resources.** The curriculum is resources to ensure that the correct equipment for practical work is available across the curriculum. In addition, resources are checked for accuracy before being shared with our children.

Curriculum Implementation

In implementing our curriculum, we aim to translate our intent into exemplary practise, using materials that are fit for purpose and promote thinking.

All children are provided with knowledge organisers when they begin a new unit in history, geography, RE or science. The knowledge organiser is a document which shows what the learning will be for that unit and outlines the key facts, knowledge, skills and subject specific vocabulary that children will learn. It gives both teachers and children the 'bigger picture' of a topic. Over time, students will build up a core bank of facts and vocabulary that will help them excel in their achievements and understand the world around them. The revision and learning of the knowledge organisers will also help students embed their knowledge and support them as they access more complicated content in later years. Teachers will use these in the following ways:

- To help children understand how learning connects. By referring to what the children already know, teachers can make explicit how the new knowledge links and connects to the facts already learnt. Making links helps information move into our long-term memory.
- To learn and spell subject specific vocabulary.
- As a recap to previous lessons.
- To use as a regular retrieval too. We set low stakes quizzes in order to test pupils' learning of facts so that we are strengthening their memory.
- A week before the start of a topic, knowledge organisers are sent home for pupils to learn facts and carry out independent learning. This ensures that pupils have a baseline of prior knowledge that the new knowledge can attach itself to. Children who are identified as needing further support are exposed to key knowledge and vocabulary through pre-learning sessions.

We recognise the importance of developing subject knowledge for all staff so that they can present subject matter clearly and promote appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught. The role of the subject co-ordinator is vital in the successful implementation of our curriculum. We aim for all subject co-ordinators to have the knowledge and expertise to lead their subjects effectively. This has implications for staff professional development and there is an ongoing focus to improve staff subject knowledge, utilising advice from external advisors and relevant national subject associations.

In lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions and provide clear feedback. They respond and adapt their teaching as necessary.